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THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

[Delivered at the Third Annual Meeting of the Association,
December 27, 1919, Washington, D. C.]

FELLOW MEMBERS:—For the third time since we became a national organization we meet together in good fellowship for the purpose of furthering the cause which we represent. Our first meeting was something of an experiment, carried on in the midst of war times and a coal famine, and on a blustering, bitter, winter's day. Our second meeting was held in the uncertain period following the armistice, when one scarcely knew what to look for next, which way to turn, what to plan for. Our members were many of them abroad; we had had difficulty in increasing our membership, but we had faith and confidence in ourselves and in the sureness of our eventual success.

We meet today under a favoring fortune. Our members have renewed their interest and courage—and have paid up back dues. New members have come in rapidly this fall. We are now nearly 1100 strong. The S. A. T. C. schools placed a damper on the teaching of Spanish. Young men were not given the opportunity to study Spanish in those schools; they had to choose French or German. But in the fall of 1919 we found that this condition had acted, apparently, only as a spur to greater interest in Spanish, for as soon as restrictions of the kind mentioned were removed, a veritable flood of students swept over the Spanish departments of the colleges and universities and only with the greatest effort could instructors be found in sufficient numbers to meet the demand for instruction in Spanish. If I have been correctly informed, there are this semester 400 first-year students of Spanish in the University of Minnesota, 450 in Indiana University, 600 in the University of Southern California, 800 in the University of Wisconsin, 1050 in Ohio State University, and 1100 in the University of Illinois. You could doubtless add to this list many similar instances in the college field. In the high schools a parallel growth is noted, though that growth, because it was not restricted by S. A. T. C. regulations, has extended over the last three or four years instead of manifesting itself in such overwhelming form at the beginning of the present scholastic year.

These conditions do not call for exultation; neither do they call for loud lamentation—as some would have it. They do demand, however, very serious attention from us and from our Association. They demand our utmost efforts to improve the instruction in Spanish, both in the high school and the college. From college departments of Spanish are due still greater efforts to prepare Americans to teach Spanish, and from high school teachers is due an unceasing quest to improve themselves in both their knowledge of the language and of methods of teaching it; and especially is it desirable that these teachers, as well as college teachers, inform themselves as thoroughly as possible concerning the life, customs, and point of view of those peoples whose native speech is Spanish.

I am most happy to say that I believe all of our members are striving toward high ideals in such matters. What we need is time, patience, faith and persistence. It is not meet nor fit that we lament lugubriously, either in public or in private, over our shortcomings. Nor is it seemly that we exult in private or in public over the trend of events. We must not bury our heads, ostrich-like, in the sand and say either that all is well or that all is very, very bad. Let us face the facts, put our shoulder to the wheel and calmly, steadily, work. Work is our salvation. A tremendous amount of work is needed in the Spanish field of the modern language world. And let me record here—if I may be permitted such a comparison—that in my opinion, the teaching of Spanish in the secondary schools, at least, of this country, is not one whit worse than is the instruction in French.

Our present growing membership and our future expansion lie, I firmly believe, in the development of local chapters. Your president and secretary have given much time and effort to encouraging, this fall, the establishment of local chapters. We now have ten such local groups—New York City, Washington, D. C., Los Angeles, Northern California, Northwest (Washington state), New Mexico, Albuquerque, Salt Lake City, Kansas, and Chicago. This movement has been welcomed everywhere with great interest. Several more chapters will be in existence before the close of the year 1920. These groups serve not only to bring into the treasury more funds—no insignificant detail—but most important of all they form centers of interest and power whence radiates in countless ways the influence which will make our Association a vital, con-

structive force in modern language teaching in our country. In the coming year it is planned to seek the establishment of chapters in Porto Rico and Cuba, and possibly in other Spanish-speaking lands. But our main efforts should be centered in the United States. I ask each of you whom these words reach to ponder well whether you cannot undertake the establishment of a local chapter in your city or state. If in distant Salt Lake City a flourishing chapter of 34 charter members can be instituted within three short weeks of effort, why should not you who live and work in regions possibly more populous be able to do as well?

The meetings of local chapters serve as an occasion for the discussion of pedagogical and scholastic matters, for talks in Spanish by those fitted for such work, and for the forming of social and friendly relationships—all of which tend to give cohesion, enthusiasm and real benefit to those having a common interest in things Spanish. The New York Chapter holds contests for excellence in Spanish in secondary schools of the city and vicinity, in which prizes are given in the form of books. It has charge of the preparation of a traveling exhibit of Spanish material to be shown this spring in all the high schools. The editor of "La Tribuna," an interesting and valuable weekly, has offered a page for the use of the local chapter. This chapter is fortunate, of course, in having at hand a large number of distinguished Spanish-speaking persons, who gladly come to speak at its meetings. Don Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, and four of the members of the Spanish delegation to the International Labor Conference have addressed its members this fall. (A series of lectures by members is being planned for suburban communities.) These are a few only, of the activities through which a local chapter can make itself useful and influential.

Our committees have done good work. The Committee on Admissions and Correlation, of which Professor Waxman was chairman, presented at our last meeting a valuable report. A copy of this appeared in HISPANIA for March, 1919. Reprints were sent to the Committee on Admissions of practically every college and university in the country. So far as I know, no direct reply was received from any of these institutions, but possibly the fact that this fall nearly every college of importance in the East at least, has accepted Spanish on a par with French and German for entrance, is, in some measure, at least, due to the distribution of this report,

in this way. Those who wish more complete information on the entrance requirements in modern languages of eastern colleges will find profitable the compilation of facts made by D. C. Rosenthal, printed in the November, 1919, number of the *Bulletin of High Points in the Work of the High Schools of New York City*. In two years more I expect to see Spanish fully established in its due place among entrance requirements.

The Committee on Selection of Honorary Members, of which Professor Fitz-Gerald was and is chairman, chose an excellent list of thirty eminent foreign Hispanists. To them has been sent an engraved certificate of honorary membership, signed by your secretary and president. The committee has now to select someone to fill the vacancy caused by the much-lamented death of Ricardo Palma, the eminent Peruvian writer.

The Committee on Scholarships in Spanish Countries, of which Mr. Carlos F. McHale is chairman, published in HISPANIA for May, 1919, a preliminary report. I am hoping that this committee may yet accomplish much good in securing the financial backing of banks and business houses engaged in Spanish-American trade to the end that we may send each year in the name of the association, one or two young men or women to study and work in Spanish-speaking countries. The work of this committee is as difficult as it is important.

The Committee on Realia, of which Professor Moreno-Lacalle is chairman, failed to make a report at our last meeting and I have asked that they report today. It is important that our members have abundant and reliable information on this very essential matter, the material recommended and available in teaching the "real things" of Spanish-speaking lands.

The war prevented hundreds of teachers of Spanish from going to Spain or Spanish-American countries to spend there their summer vacations, or longer periods, in study and travel, and in acquiring a first-hand knowledge of the foreign land. The war is over, in fact if not in theory, and these teachers are anxious to sail *con rumbo a España o a la América Española*. Some have suggested that our Association organize trips for teachers. One person even suggested we charter an entire ship bound for a Spanish port. I do not doubt that the ship could be filled to overflowing. But I hardly think the Association is ready to assume, or should be expected to assume, such a burden.

We can, however, coöperate with other agencies in effecting these desired *romerías*. I shall cite three possibilities. First, Spain. Mr. Jose Castillejo, of the *Junta para Ampliación de Estudios* of Madrid, came to this country last spring as an accredited representative of the Spanish *Ministerio de Instrucción Pública*. He visited many colleges. As he left he sent a circular letter to the colleges of the United States, offering coöperation of a very sensible kind, between Spanish universities and those here. His plans were printed in HISPANIA for November, 1919. In passing, let me say, that none of our institutions have, as yet, taken up the ideas advanced by Mr. Castillejo. But Mr. Joaquín Ortega, who is now in Spain, absent on leave from the University of Minnesota, has written me recently that he has plans for taking a large party of American teachers to Spain next summer for study in the courses offered by the *Junta*. He returns in January and has stated that he will come to talk with me about this project. Those interested might wish to write me about this in February.

For several months I have been in correspondence with Commissioner P. G. Miller of Porto Rico, in regard to the establishment of courses for our teachers in the University of Porto Rico. On November 28th the trustees of that university adopted the following resolutions:

1. That for the purpose of coöperation in the general movement of securing properly trained teachers of Spanish the University of Porto Rico conduct a summer session of six or seven weeks, from July 5, 1920, to August 13 or August 20, 1920, at Río Piedras.

2. That the Board of Trustees grant the use of buildings, equipment and facilities necessary for giving this course.

3. That the Board of Trustees charge a tuition fee of \$10 for the entire session.

4. That the Board of Trustees appoint properly qualified teachers from the regular instructional staff of the University and the staff of the Department of Education to give this instruction.

5. That the Dean of the Río Piedras Departments together with the Vice-Dean and the Chancellor be authorized to outline courses in Spanish Language, Grammar, Composition and Literature whose scope and method are adapted to the need of teachers and prospective teachers.

6. That the aforementioned committee be authorized to prepare and cause to be printed and distributed the necessary prospectus in order that the courses to be offered may be advertised as widely as possible.

7. That the President of the Board of Trustees be authorized to communicate with the Bureau of Insular Affairs with reference to securing transportation facilities for any teachers in the United States that may desire to take advantage of these courses.

8. That the Dean of the Río Piedras Departments be authorized to prepare a statement of boarding and rooming facilities in Río Piedras, Hato Rey and Santurce for prospective students.

Commissioner Miller, in a letter transmitting to me these resolutions, says that it is cooler in Río Piedras in the summer than in New York or Philadelphia. A constant sea breeze keeps one very comfortable. He also says: "The greatest difficulty, I believe, is the matter of securing transportation to and from Porto Rico." But possibly the Bureau of Insular Affairs will be able to aid very materially in securing transportation for those teachers who would wish to attend these courses. The Commissioner asks that I give as much publicity as possible to this plan and I am very glad to do so.

Another opportunity for foreign study, an excellent one, in my opinion, and probably a less expensive one than a trip to Spain, is offered us by the Minister of Public Instruction of Costa Rica, Mr. García Monje. Mr. Arturo Torres, at present of the Educational Department of the Pan-American Union, and one of our efficient teachers of Spanish in the New York high schools, conferred with me the past year about establishing in Costa Rica such a school for American teachers. I encouraged him in the idea, and now we have a definite proposition before us. The Costa Rican government offers two buildings, the Liceo in San Jose, and the Escuela Normal, in Heredia, twenty minutes' ride from San Jose, and the necessary professors for the work that the summer courses may require. It will also provide playgrounds, dance-halls and facilities for visiting the different parts of the country. It is estimated that each teacher's expenses for board, excursions, etc., will amount to about \$100 a month. This offer is made to us as an association. I ask you to discuss it today when we reach the head of "new business" and to act upon it. If you approve, a committee should be appointed to draw up the program of courses of study and make further arrangements. Mr. Lowrie, the passenger agent of the United Fruit Company, informs me that round-trip passage would be \$225, thus bringing the total expense to from \$425 to \$500. This gentleman offers to issue such a circular as we may wish to draw up and to send it to all our members and to others whose names we might give.

A word about HISPANIA. The Executive Council has "with the advice and consent" of the secretary-treasurer, approved for the year of 1920 the continuation of the plan of publishing our lively journal six times during the year, with the proviso that the issue

for November may be withdrawn if circumstances make it necessary. This will cost us about \$2,300. Our energetic advertising manager, Dr. Erwin W. Roessler, has been a tower of strength to us financially in that he has secured contracts that will defray to a good extent that expense, probably \$800 of it. That will help. But we all can help. We can seek new members. Every two dollars will go to make a better HISPANIA and permit the Association to make itself more useful. We shall have to limit, however, our numbers to 64 pages, if we publish six times a year.

An editor's task, I know from experience, is a more or less thankless one. He receives many a knock with seldom a boost. The editorial policy of the review is by now pretty well established. It seems, on the whole, to have been a wise policy. Beyond doubt, we like to believe, HISPANIA is at present the most alive modern language publication in the country. That it can be improved there is no doubt. It can best be improved by your contribution to its columns, serious scholarly or pedagogical contributions. Write *to* the editor. Tell him what you like or don't like. Write *for* the editor, and be philosophical if he returns your manuscript. But in any case, *write*. Send him material for *News and Notes*, if you do nothing else.

I have spoken of the need for new members. We had a Thousand-Member Drive. We got our thousand members. Let us make a drive now for fifteen hundred by the time we meet again. We can get them. And have you yourself thought carefully, about becoming a life member? We have eighteen at present. We should have fifty. Will you not be one of these thirty-two new ones? Annual dues, already paid in, may be counted toward payment on a life membership.

It might be in place here to recite some of the notable services of our members during the past year. If I did this subject justice, I should consume too much of our time. But I must refer to a few incidents. Our First Vice-President, Professor Schevill, on August 20, made an address before the *Sociedad de Menéndez y Pelayo* at its first meeting in Santander, Spain. This meeting was presided over by King Alfonso and was a notable occasion. Professor Ford's *Main Currents of Spanish Literature*, Professor Turrell's *Contemporary Spanish Dramatists*, and Professor Schevill's *Cervantes* are to be mentioned with much satisfaction when

one speaks of scholarly publications. Many of our members have written timely and thoughtful articles for the educational journals. A generous tribute of thanks is due Professor Northup for his bibliographies published in *HISPANIA*. In the work of establishing local chapters much credit should be given Dr. Sherwell and Professor Doyle, Mr. Shield and Professor Schulz, Professor Umphrey, Professor Schevill, Mr. Montoya, Professors Roberts and Fitzgerald, Miss Domenge, Professor Owen, and Mr. Sundstrom.

In closing, let me publicly express my keen appreciation of the work of our efficient Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Coester. He has handled promptly and in an orderly, business-like manner, the burdensome work of his office. He has given much time to his duties. A very large measure of our success is due to his efforts. Much to the regret of us in New York, he is leaving tomorrow to assume his duties as Assistant Professor of Spanish in Stanford University. I know I speak for you all when I express wishes for his complete success and happiness in the Golden West, the lure of whose sunshine and the hospitality of whose people, I had occasion to enjoy the past summer. I wonder not at his going. I wish also to express here my very sincere gratitude to the members of the Executive Council for their hearty coöperation and wise advice. They have been whole-hearted workers.

I come to the close of my term of office, most happy in the fact that this Association is what it is. When three short years ago a few of us gathered in a small room in a Broadway hotel one Saturday afternoon and formed a Spanish Teachers' Association, we then little hoped, I think, that around that nucleus would grow the successful national society we have today. But dreams have a way of coming true when backed by faith and work. I feel extraordinarily happy and humbly proud today that in the first two years of the existence of our national society I have been your president. I thank you for the opportunity you have given me to be of service and assure you of my unlimited loyalty and devotion throughout the future.

LAWRENCE A. WILKINS